



Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Workshop #1 – Issues , Goals & Opportunities

June 30, 2004
California Baptist University

MAGNOLIA AVENUE SUBCOMMITTEE

5:00 – 6:25 P.M.

- ♦ Landscape the entire corridor.
- ♦ Need to figure out a way to pay for it.
- ♦ Improvement District? Spread out costs over a large area.
- ♦ Consider Victoria Avenue approach for under-grounding utilities.
- ♦ There is a significant cost for under-grounding utilities, but it creates a beautiful street and should be included as a long-term vision.
- ♦ What we do now will last for 100's of years, and the cost today will be far greater tomorrow.
- ♦ Riverside is hot in summer months – need additional shade at the bus stops. The lack of shading at bus stops needs to be dealt with.
- ♦ Express bus is a good idea.
- ♦ Pattern of new land uses proposed in the Draft General Plan supports Bus Rapid Transit.
- ♦ Anything to enhance the aesthetic of the street needs to be done. We need additional landscaping to soften the appearance of the street.
- ♦ We should strategically look at “taking back” some of the median to green the corridor. Consider taking out some of the left turn lanes – this should be studied.
- ♦ The existing bike lane along Magnolia is not a good bike lane. It needs major improvement.
- ♦ Potentially look at bringing the parkway out to street and moving the bike lane inside of the curb to improve the bike lane and further the parkway concept of Magnolia Avenue in the Draft General Plan.
- ♦ There are federal funds to accomplish bike/pedestrian/transit improvements.
- ♦ Look at public art to identify the Districts along Magnolia Avenue and at the Bus Rapid Transit stops.
- ♦ Special paving treatments should be considered at certain intersections.
- ♦ Consider speed limit changes along Magnolia to slow down traffic and control traffic flow.
- ♦ Each District along Magnolia already has its own architectural flavor and palette of design/colors. This should be continued and regulated.
- ♦ Consider varying pedestrian scaled light poles by District to differentiate between Districts.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP
6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

- ♦ Need railroad grade separation – there are long waiting times at the railroad crossing in the Magnolia Center District.
- ♦ Traffic is bottlenecked at Dewey Avenue.
- ♦ Truck traffic along Magnolia Avenue is a problem.
- ♦ Light rail should be considered.
- ♦ The City should make “bold moves”, such as a raised monorail along corridor down the median.
- ♦ Question: What is the City’s plan for Arlington Avenue where it crosses Magnolia? Answer: It will remain four lanes per the updated General Plan designation.
- ♦ Street traffic through Wood Streets is not monitored and it is a problem. A median parkway would help. Consider putting median parkway back in this District.
- ♦ Speed of traffic is a problem through the residential areas, but there is a general feeling that speed is ok through other portions of the corridor.
- ♦ The gateway into the City at Magnolia Avenue is important – start with improvements to the gateway.
- ♦ There is support and appreciation for the gateway improvements on Market Street at the other end of the corridor. Consider similar gateway treatments on Magnolia Avenue at the western entrance to the City.
- ♦ Need better turn outs for bus stops.
- ♦ Would like to see transit villages at Bus Rapid Transit stops.
- ♦ The railroad tracks in Magnolia Center have a negative impact on Magnolia Avenue and the area.
- ♦ Every 17 minutes a train goes by and this causes havoc.
- ♦ The train blocks many streets, more than just Magnolia Avenue.
- ♦ The intersection of Magnolia Avenue and Beatty Drive needs audible crossing assistance.
- ♦ The City needs better Code Enforcement along Magnolia Avenue. There is a problem with weeds and no landscaping. The citizens must call to get enforcement and this is a problem.
- ♦ Continue the historic flavor of Wood Streets. This needs to be preserved and enhanced. Consider a planted median, vintage streets lights and street signs.
- ♦ There needs to be continuity down corridor.
- ♦ Extend a trolley system from Downtown to Riverside Plaza through Wood Streets.
- ♦ Need more historic signage in the Districts. Depict the history of Magnolia Avenue and the Districts along the route.



- ♦ The blue metal RTA benches at the bus stops are not as good as what was there before.
- ♦ Public art at RTA bus stops would be good.
- ♦ Better architectural review needs to be done for development along the corridor.
- ♦ Need design guidelines/palette in each District.
- ♦ The *1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study* referred to Magnolia Avenue as having “Pearls on a String.” The ideas of this plan should be continued and included in this Specific Plan. Each District should be its own unique hub.
- ♦ How can we apply unifying signage, streetscapes, etc. to entire corridor when we have such diverse Districts or “hubs”? We would be better served talking about improvements to each District.
- ♦ It is very important to think of pedestrian accessibility. Need better pedestrian access in all shopping areas.
- ♦ In the Plan, we need to address the heavy traffic congestion along Magnolia. Need emphasis on other modes of transportation – transit, walking, biking, neighborhood vehicles (small scale buses, neighborhood golf carts, etc.).
- ♦ Mixed reactions to speed bumps along Magnolia.
- ♦ What about the issue of maintenance if more landscaping is added along Magnolia Avenue in the public right-of-way? There is already a problem with maintenance.
- ♦ Question: Would you be willing to pay for some of these improvements? Answer from crowd: Not many.
- ♦ Question: Would you consider Improvement Districts as a vehicle for funding? Answer from crowd: General agreement to paying a little bit for public improvements through such a mechanism.
- ♦ An Arlington Village Improvement District has been established and is accomplishing a lot. This Improvement District is grappling with a lot of issues, such as better landscaping versus retail businesses fronting the street.
- ♦ The Arlington Community Plan was intended to make a pedestrian friendly village area.
- ♦ Between Jurupa and Arlington Avenue, the painted window signs look bad. Need signage improvements and standards.
- ♦ Question: We are hearing lots of good suggestions -- does the City have any money for these improvements? Answer: Within limits, the City has funds.
- ♦ There are some redevelopment areas covering portions of this corridor. Also, money can come from the City’s General Fund and Improvement Districts. In addition, there are innovative grants to apply for, such as TEA-21 (federal transportation funding source).
- ♦ Question: What is a pedestrian mall? How can Arlington be considered a pedestrian mall when it is divided by Van Buren? And where are the pedestrians? And how many people walk across Tyler? As long as you use pedestrian mall as basis for planning, it won’t work. People get there by car, not by walking.

- ♦ Answer: There are examples of busy streets with nice pedestrian environments on both sides. The City is making a reasonable set of trade-offs regarding circulation in the Draft General Plan – Van Buren is being widened as it is a major regional thoroughfare and Magnolia Avenue will be maintained at four lanes. Characteristics of a pedestrian environment include: human-scaled buildings, nice streetscapes, clean and safe streets, and appropriate land uses to attract more people. Need better stores to attract pedestrians.



- ♦ Question: Why aren't the stores in Arlington better than they are? Answer: Need market for land uses in commercial areas, need an attraction, need to promote it. Concepts in General Plan and this Specific Plan could make a great pedestrian environment in Arlington.
- ♦ Nobody has mentioned the three schools on Magnolia Avenue. What about safety for children? What about temporary measures to get drivers to slow down. Need speed bumps for safety.
- ♦ Question: What can be done to improve dilapidated single-family residences and apartments between Adams and Arlington Avenue? Answer: Several ways – housing units can be recycled by the private sector. May go slightly denser but improve quality. Mainly private sector will upgrade housing with good development standards and design guidelines.
- ♦ Question: What about pedestrian overpasses like in Las Vegas? Answer: Pedestrian overpasses need to conveniently serve a lot of people to be successful or they are underused. Can be very successful in larger scale projects. They work best with a gradual, natural flow along a path versus climbing stairs. They can be considered.
- ♦ Hardly anybody crosses Magnolia and Central because of congestion. It is difficult for both pedestrians and cars.
- ♦ Question: Is it possible to start landscaping improvements soon? Particularly near Buchanan. Do we have to wait years for this to happen? Answer: Look at innovative funding sources for improvements to this corridor.
- ♦ If money is not there right now, consider asking volunteers to pull weeds/plant trees, etc. This is a successful way to get things done.
- ♦ There is a nice new Plaza in Magnolia Center, but the other dilapidated buildings need attention.
- ♦ The solution to improving Magnolia Avenue is going to be by differentiating between Districts and enhancing their unique characteristics.
- ♦ Main concern is public safety...really want a safe environment.
- ♦ There is a historic district designation in a portion of Wood Streets. Consider expanding this for other portions of Magnolia Avenue.

- ♦ Wood Streets is very congested with cars along the residential streets. The Police Department currently has a program where they are encouraging people to use their driveways more and get their cars out of the street. Homeowners should be encouraged to work with Police on this.
- ♦ Improve parking in Magnolia Center. There is not enough of it. Businesses are improving, but parking is the same.
- ♦ Many people put businesses in without enough parking. Maybe they should consider another location.
- ♦ It is important to address walking along Magnolia Avenue. Make it walking friendly and safe. Victoria Avenue is nice, but is not safe. Magnolia needs trees for shade and benches to stop and rest, as well as drinking fountains and trash cans. It needs these things to accommodate pedestrians.
- ♦ People generally favor the idea of a more park-like environment along Magnolia Avenue for pedestrians, bike lanes, trees, etc.
- ♦ Current street sweeping is not good enough. Need signs posted for cars to not park on cleaning days.
- ♦ Question: As approved this will be a regulatory document. Will it define how options in it will be paid for? Answer: It will have strategies for how to pay for public improvements.
- ♦ In Santa Ana property values went up drastically with a Specific Plan. A Specific Plan along Magnolia is a good idea.
- ♦ Mixed-use must be policed properly.
- ♦ For new apartments, consider artisan-suite concept. Down stairs commercial with upstairs live/work units.
- ♦ Need a unifying theme throughout corridor.
- ♦ There is a traffic issue – consider cul-de-sacs, exit only traffic in some areas for traffic calming.
- ♦ Look at the improvements CBU has made for landscaping when considering landscaping improvements. Also, landscaping must be maintained. Landscaping is important for curb appeal and this increases property values.
- ♦ Property values will be greater with public improvements.
- ♦ Santa Ana used an Empowerment Zone. This was helpful in getting funds from federal government to assist.
- ♦ Question: What can we do about limiting growth or stopping growth in the area? Answer: Plan intelligently for growth – need federal, state, local tools to manage growth.
- ♦ RTA hears from the public tonight that they need to put attention to ugly bus benches. They will continue to work with City to bring transit centers and nodes around the system. They are committed to making the buses more comfortable and making the system run better.
- ♦ In Arlington we need to enforce businesses to clean up their businesses. They are an eyesore.

- ♦ Councilman Adkison: Currently getting some funding mechanisms from county. Arlington citizens successful in getting money from the County for Lowe's project. Also used redevelopment money for Magnolia beautification from Lowe's Center through Arlington. The Arlington Community Committee is responsible for the Improvement District. Some projects include façade improvements. Key to these changes in Arlington is community involvement. Need the community to implement this Plan.
- ♦ We will not only grow, but also grow older. We must plan for aging. There is a demand for things such as places to sit, and shade.
- ♦ Bring beauty to Magnolia. Need to hold new development to stricter standards. Need design review standards. City lost its Design Review Board -- we should get it back.
- ♦ Arlington Community stuck to good standards with new Lowe's and got a good project.
- ♦ Put restrooms and showers along Magnolia for the homeless.
- ♦ Will people leave freeway to use Magnolia because it's so attractive? We need to find regional solutions to transportation.
- ♦ Councilman Adkison: Update on the Arlington Library – funded \$2 million to acquire properties next to library to expand it and restore original structure. Ground breaking in about one year.
- ♦ What about the library on Central in the Magnolia Center District? This should be improved.
- ♦ Question: Will the City's Website have updates on the project? Answer: Yes.
- ♦ Question: What about the 1999 *Magnolia/Market Corridor Study*? A lot of the comments tonight are already included in this study. It should be used in this Plan. Answer: This Plan will use the 1999 *Magnolia/Market Corridor Study* as a basis and will include many of the recommendations from it.
- ♦ Question: Will the City Council members who are in attendance please stand up and identify yourselves and which portion of the corridor your Ward includes? Answer: Yes. Ed Adkison representing Arlington; Art Gage representing Magnolia Center; Steve Adams representing La Sierra.
- ♦ Magnolia Avenue does have good consistency running through it already. This should be enhanced. Should focus on consistency throughout the corridor and on uniqueness of each area. Form a committee for each area to work locally, and also unify district with consistency.
- ♦ Consider flashing lights at schools – need things to make the street safe.



ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY PLANNING STAFF

- ♦ Question: Why are we doing this Plan since there is already the *1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study*? Answer: The *1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study* is not a regulatory document and the Specific Plan will give the City tools that are needed to implement specific standards along the Corridor. The Study is an essential part of this process and will be used as a backbone for the preparation of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan.
- ♦ Magnolia Avenue should be a tree-lined thoroughfare. It should feature locally owned businesses where residents who live near Magnolia can walk around their neighborhoods and meet all their needs. An example is the Wood Streets neighborhood where you never have to get into your car to grocery shop, dine, utilize services, or even take a college class, and can go to locally owned businesses such as Antone's, Taylor's Appliance, Center Lumber, Soup Shoppe, etc. The old-fashioned "walk around town" lifestyle can fit much of Magnolia and should be cultivated in Riverside.
- ♦ Undergrounding of overhead utilities would help at various locations, such as the section of Magnolia Avenue west of Tyler. Although resources for this are limited, the Specific Plan is a long-range plan and undergrounding should be put on the list of things that should be done to improve the street.
- ♦ Magnolia Avenue should be widened between Madison and Jefferson to line up with Ramona High. This will help reduce the number of accidents occurring along that stretch.
- ♦ Telephone lines and other utilities should be relocated underground along Magnolia Avenue. This would contribute greatly to the desired effect of recreating an attractive parkway all along the corridor.
- ♦ Would like to see a Metrolink station in the vicinity of Merrill and Magnolia. Although there is typically at 3 mile separation between stops and this one would only be 2 miles from the downtown station, this would be an excellent station due to its proximity to the Plaza and also an origin station, given the planned addition of housing to the immediate area by way of the mixed use designations that are proposed in the General Plan.